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# From "counter-revolutionary monuments" to "national heritage"

## The Preservation of Leningrad Churches, 1964-1982

*Des « monuments contre-révolutionnaires » à « l'héritage national » : la préservation des églises de Leningrad, 1964-1982*

**Catriona Kelly**

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CATRIONA KELLY

# FROM "COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY MONUMENTS" TO "NATIONAL HERITAGE"

## The Preservation of Leningrad Churches, 1964-1982[1]

On 2 July 1975, the Commission for the History, Preservation, and Restoration of Monuments at the Leningrad Section of the Union of Architects (LOSA) and the Union's City Planning Commission held a meeting devoted to the proposed reconstruction of Haymarket Square (Sennaya ploshchad´), known from 1952 to 1992 as "Peace Square" (ploshchad´ Mira). The meeting, described in Russian as "extended" (*rasshirennoe*) was an event that, characterically for the times, called into question the division between "public" and "private."[2] It was unadvertised, and held in a place that was, technically, open only to members. Yet it was typical, at this period, for events held in the creative unions to be attended by the family

1. The present article draws on research for my book project, *Socialist Churches: Radical Secularisation and Heritage Preservation in Petrograd and Leningrad, 1918-1991*, generously sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK (research grant "National Identity in Russia: Traditions and Deterritorialisation," 2007-2011). Travel and interviewing costs were also supported by the Ludwig Fund, New College. Interviews from the project are cited with the code Oxf/AHRC, the place code SPb. and date (09 etc.), and also a recording number and the initials of the interviewer. My thanks go to the interviewers and informants, and also to Alexander D. Margolis, Mikhail V. Shkarovsky, Alexander V. Kobak, and Alexandra M. Piir for their help and advice. I would also like to thank the anonymous readers of *Cahiers du Monde russe*, and the audience of the Russian History Workshop at Georgetown University, particularly Michael David-Fox, Eric Lohr, and Steven A. Grant, for their comments, which were greatly to the benefit of the final text.

2. For studies that posit a straightforward division between public and private behaviour, see e.g. Vladimir Shlapentokh. *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People: Changing Values in Post-Stalin Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Elena Zubkova, *Russia After the War: Hopes, Illusions, and* Disappointments, 1945-1957 (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998). For work that takes a more complex view of this divide, see e.g. Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The 'Last" Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), and the contributions to Lewis Siegelbaum, ed., *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Stalin's Russia* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2006).

*Cahiers du monde russe, 54/1-2, Janvier-juin 2013, p. 131-164.*

members, associates, and assorted hangers-on of actual members.[3] And in this case, those attending by official invitation (more than 60 in all, according to the official minutes) included at least a dozen non-architects, among them members of the Union of Artists, such as the sculptor Valentina Malakhieva (1923-1997), representatives of the All-Russian Society for the Preservation of Monuments of History and Culture (VOOPIiK), and other people from Soviet "public life" (*obshchestvennost´*), such as the historian T.A. Kukushkina from Leningrad State University. Other outsiders may have figured as unlisted members of the audience.[4]

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a plan that had been drawn up by the architect D.A. Butyrin (1933-2010). This proposed to offset the erection of a new bus station on Haymarket Square by rebuilding the bell-tower of the former Church of the Dormition (popularly known as "The Saviour on the Haymarket," Spas na Sennoi), demolished in January 1961 in order to make room for the overground pavilion of a metro station.[5] The discussion rapidly started to range much further, however, with some contributions, such as Malakhieva's, becoming very emotional:

> Not long ago we were here to discuss the preservation of the Cathedral of Saints Boris and Gleb on the Sinope Embankment. Many vital, important, and accurate things were said. And then what? The cathedral got blown up! Never mind all our discussions and motions. And on the thirtieth anniversary of Victory [in World War II] as well.
> When our enemies blew up our monuments, it was clear what they were doing – destroying our culture. But what about when we do it ourselves? The last speaker said, 'It's dreadful that the church on the Haymarket was blown up, but the people who are guilty aren't around any more, we should make a fresh start.' That's a great suggestion – refuse to recognise your mistakes, and make them all over again.[6]

Another participant in the discussion, the architect and architectural historian Vladimir Lisovsky, went as far as to argue that "simply reconstructing the bell-tower

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3. E.g. in the Dom kinematografista (the filmakers' central club in Leningrad), as I recall from direct observation in 1981.

4. There is no overall list of those attending: those mentioned are those who actually spoke.

5. A Decree of the Presidium of Lensovet passed on 21 January 1960, "O stroitel´stve vtorogo uchastka Moskovsko-Petrogradskoi linii metropolitena imeni V.I. Lenina v Leningrade [On the Construction of the Second Section of the Moskovsky prospekt-Petrograd Side Line of the Leningrad Underground Railway Named after V.I. Lenin]," implementing an earlier decree of Lensovet's Executive Committee (4 June 1959), stated that the station, then called "Oktiabr´skaia," should be built "in place of the church." The church was to be cleared by the executive committee of the local district (Oktiabr´skii) by 1 May 1960, and handed over to Lenmetrostroi for demolition (TsGANTD-SPb. [Central State Archive of Scientific and Technical Documentation, St. Petersburg], f. 36, op. 1-1, d. 353, l. 7, l. 9).

6. "Protokol rasshirennogo zasedaniia komissii okhrany pamiatnikov istorii i kul´tury i gradostroitel´noi komissii LOSA, sovmestno s Leningradskim otdeleniem VOOPIiK [Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Commission on the Preservation of Monuments of History and Culture and City Planning of LOSA and the Leningrad Section of VOOPIiK]," 2 July 1975, TsGALI-SPb. [Central State Archive of Literature and Art, St. Petersburg], f. 229, op. 1, d. 117, l. 21. The reference to "cathedral" here is a slip of the tongue – the Church of Saints Boris and Gleb was never accorded that status.

is pointless; we should reconstruct the church too," though he did immediately add, "but that's quite impossible."[7] For T.A. Kukushkina, the demise of the church "damages our entire culture."[8]

Whatever the extent of their disagreement about what to do with Haymarket Square in the 1975 present, those attending the meeting were firmly agreed about one thing. The demolition of the Church of the Saviour had been "a fatal error of city planning" (*rokovaya gradostroitel´naya oshibka*), and an affront to their own relationship with the city as well. As the architect Oleg Bashinsky put it:

> In my memories, the only thing that the Haymarket calls to mind is the church. The loss is incalculable. If there is any chance of reconstructing it, then that must be done.[9]

With hindsight, informed by the widespread restitution of churches to religious denominations beginning in the late 1980s, and the reconstruction of demolished ecclesiastical buildings in the following two decades, the events of 1975 may not appear very surprising.[10] However, at the time, things seemed different. It is difficult to overstate just what a turning point the Brezhnev era represented with regard to the status of churches (and more generally, historic buildings) in the aesthetic hierarchy of the Russian intelligentsia generally, and of the Leningrad intelligentsia particularly.

This article sets out to examine the processes by which attitudes to the historic churches of Leningrad altered, and the underlying causes behind these processes. It assesses the effects of the shift in taste on the questions of which buildings were considered worthy of preservation and how they were cared for. It also discusses the impact of the new perceptions on the treatment, in city planning, of entire urban spaces, using the Haymarket – one of Leningrad's key central squares, and a cause of planning headaches since the 1940s – as a focus for the discussion. I illustrate the emergence of a general consensus that preservation of historic churches should be enhanced. But I also identify the persistence of very significant differences about the social role of the churches. Different groups of social actors (religious believers, the Church hierarchy, officials in the State Inspectorate for the Preservation of Monuments (GIOP), members of VOOPIiK, non-affiliated intellectuals of different

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7. Ibid., l. 24.

8. Ibid., l. 21.

9. Ibid., l. 28.

10. For a usefully broad discussion of the changes, see Stephen A. Smith, "Contentious Heritage: Churches in Russia and Temples in China in Communist and Post-Communist Times," publication forthcoming. My thanks to the author for making a copy of this article available to me in advance of publication. See also Sanami Takahashi, "Church or Museum? The Role of State Museums in Conserving Church Buildings, 1965-85," in *Journal of Church and State*, 51, 3 (2009): 502-517; and Victoria Arnold, "The Experience of Sacred Place in Post-Soviet Russia: a Geography of Orthodoxy and Islam in *Perm´* Krai," D. Phil Thesis, Oxford, 2012 (which includes a discussion of Soviet attitudes to "sacred space"). A general study of property restitution is Csongor Kuti, *Post-Communist Restitution and the Rule of Law* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009): on the Orthodox Church, see p. 199-201.

stances and generations) all had their own, often contradictory, notions of what the purpose of these buildings should be. After an introductory section addressing the general historical background, I give a brief sketch of heritage preservation policy in Leningrad under Stalin and Khrushchev, before explaining the shift in attitudes to churches that took place in the late 1960s, and its impact on the treatment of individual buildings and of integrated urban spaces.

## Rediscovering History: The Moderation of Late-Soviet Modernism

The discussion of Leningrad appeals not just because of the famous architectural merits of the place (though that consideration is, obviously, important), but because the late Soviet era saw a gradual breakdown of the strongly centralising drive of mature Stalinist culture, manifested, among other things, in the rigid control over the spatial world of the so-called "model socialist city." In the 1930s, cities were often planned long-distance, by officials whose command of the territory that they aimed to regulate might be distinctly vague.[11] While a great deal of standard building still went on after 1953 – indeed, the famous "Decree on Architectural Excesses" of 1955 demanded the increased use of pattern-book systems-building for new residential buildings – there was a very active revival of "regional studies" (*kraevedenie*) that included close attention to the material world of local urban localities.[12] In this respect, precisely a "peripheral" view of Soviet culture can be revealing, not just in pointing to the standardisation of culture, but to ways in which it was becoming more diverse.

Such a microhistory is illuminating also because the examination of how planners and architects handled the case of churches lays bare some vital contradictions in the culture of "developed socialism." From the late 1960s onwards, the recuperation of the past was often generously accommodating, and included much attention to non-Soviet phenomena and objects, from the salon culture of the 1820s to the boyar palaces of the medieval and early modern periods.[13] This was a phenomenon quite different in kind from the "national Bolshevism" of the Stalin years, with its

11. For a discussion of long-distance planning in Gor´kii, see Heather DeHaan, *Stalinist City: Planners, Performance, and Power in 1930s Nizhnii Novgorod* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013); for the centralisation of the landscape, more generally, see Evgeny Dobrenko and Eric Naiman, eds., *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

12. See Victoria Donovan's study of three Old Russian cities at this era, Pskov, Novgorod, and Vologda, "*Nestolichnaia kul´tura*: Regional and National Identity in Post-1961 Russian Culture," D.Phil Thesis, University of Oxford, 2011. There is a brief discussion of the revival of *kraevedenie* in Emily D. Johnson, *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself: The Russian Idea of Kraevedenie* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), p. 176-182.

13. Two major figures here, both Leningraders, are Dmitry Sergeevich Likhachev and Yurii Mikhailovich Lotman; crucial publications by them include Likhachev's *Poetika drevnerusskoi literatury* [Poetics of Old Russian Literature] (L.: Nauka, 1969) and Lotman's *Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin: Biografiia pisatelia* [Alexander Pushkin: Biography of a Writer] (L.: Prosveshchenie, 1981). On the recuperation of medieval buildings, see Alexei Elfimov, *Russian Intellectual Culture in Transition: The Future in the Past* (Münster: Lit, 2003).

definition of the national patrimony in terms of a strictly denominated canon of great writers, great artists, and master architects.[14] Yet a highly ideologised view of the past and present persisted, and some historical objects were considered more valuable than others. The promptings for preservation were not only, and indeed not mainly, aesthetic. Buildings considered of little architectural importance, but linked with famous figures in the Soviet canon, were, on the whole, better preserved than buildings that were considered to be of high architectural importance, but whose associations were with dubious persons or practices.[15] Further, the whole process of recuperating the national patrimony was fraught with risks. It is at one level reasonable to understand the Brezhnev era as a period when the "Russian party" in government finally gained the ascendancy, to be followed by the all-out resurgence of conservative nationalism in the Gorbachev era and its legitimation after the collapse of Soviet power.[16] But there were other forces at work too, as illustrated, for example, by an explicit attack that B.S. Andreev, a secretary of the Leningrad City Committee, levelled at "Slavophile tendencies" during a speech to Leningrad Komsomol propagandists in 1972. That too much interest in "the Russian soul" might make one slide away from interpretation in terms of social classes' (*sotsial´no-klassovyi podkhod*) remained a significant anxiety.[17]

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14. To date, discussion of Stalinist culture has focused mainly on canon formation in written texts (see e.g. David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Evgeny Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Reader: Social and Aesthetic Contexts of the Reception of Soviet Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); idem, *The Making of the State Writer: Social and Aesthetic Contexts of Soviet Literature* (Stanford University Press, 2001); with some attention also to art history, Jan Plamper, *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Oliver Johnson, "The Stalin Prize and the Soviet Artist: Status Symbol or Stigma?," *Slavic Review*, 70, 4 (2011): 819-843, but the process could be matched in architectural history: for an account focusing mainly on political purges in the architectural world, see Hugh D. Hudson, *Blueprints and Blood: the Stalinization of Soviet Architecture, 1917-1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

15. In Leningrad, the "monuments of history" (as opposed to 'monuments of architecture") included, alongside the buildings linked with the October Revolution and its historical actors, headed by Lenin, the various apartments and other places associated with famous writers and artists, headed by Pushkin. Great efforts were made to preserve these sites in a manner appropriate to their perceived historical importance: for example, when a rank-and-file Communist wrote in 1978 to the Lenin Museum in Moscow that the setting of the Lenin memorial in Razliv (where the leader had camped out between revolutions in 1917) was being "ruined" by the construction of hotels and "amusement venues" nearby, the result was an exhaustive enquiry by the Leningrad Party authorities (TsGAIPD-SPb. [Central State Archive of Historical and Political Documents, St. Petersburg], f. 24, op. 210, d. 2, l. 29-35).

16. For influential discussions of the revival of nationalism under Brezhnev, *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); idem, *The New Russian Nationalism* (New York: Praeger, 1985); Geoffrey Hosking, *The Awakening of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Yitzhak M. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Nikolai Mitrokhin, *Russkaia partiia: dvizhenie russkikh natsionalistov v SSSR, 1953-1985 gody* [The Russian Group: The Russian Nationalist Movement in the USSR, 1953-1985] (M.: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2003).

17. Speech by B.S. Andreev, Secretary of the Leningrad City Committee of the Komsomol: "Stenograficheskii otchet seminara propagandistov komsomol´skogo politprosveshcheniia i komsomol´skogo aktiva [Stenographic Record of the Seminar of Komsomol Political Education

Churches were, from this point of view, a decidedly ticklish case. As Steve Smith has pointed out,

> The preservation of places of worship posed a particular challenge to Communist regimes, since it was in this area that the desire to maintain the national patrimony collided with the usually stronger desire to build an industrial, urban and socialist society emancipated from religious belief.[18]

The drive to promote rational atheism lasted until the very end of Soviet power: as late as 1986, the Komsomol, in collaboration with the State Museum of Ethnography in Leningrad, mounted an expedition to Pskov province in order to carry out an investigation of religious beliefs among young people, and to inculcate new, secular traditions.[19] To put it another way, one could say that churches, and religious art more generally, embodied what the anthropologist Michael Herzfeld has termed "cultural intimacy," being seen both as an inalienable expression of the spiritual attainment (*dukhovnost´*) of Russian culture, and as a manifestation of its shameful backwardness.[20] As N.R. Levinson, writing in 1932, put it,

> In the vestries of churches and monasteries, as well as run-of-the-mill cultic theatrical props meant only to have an effect through rich appearance and vulgar glitter, many items of refined craftsmanship were hidden away.[21]

Yet at the same time, attitudes to ecclesiastical art and church architecture were not inflexible, and they underwent significant changes over time. In the 1930s, the view that a "cultic building" was by definition a "counter-revolutionary monument" had been widespread.[22] At the meeting in LOSA on 2 July 1975, by contrast, not one person used this term, and the arguments against rebuilding the Saviour on the

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Propagandists and the Komsomol *actif*], 25 September 1972. TsGAIPD-SPb., f. K-598, op. 27, d. 457, l. 98. The anthropologist Sergei Alymov has produced several exemplary studies of the slippery relation with inherited culture in post-war Soviet ideological texts: see e.g. "The Concept of the 'Survival' in Soviet Social Science of the 1950s and 1960s," *Forum for Anthropology and Culture* 9 (2013), 157-183.

18. Smith, "Contentious Heritage," 1.

19. "O rabote komitetov Komsomola Pskovskoi oblasti po ateisticheskomu vospitaniyu yunoshei i devushek, vnedreniiu novykh obriadov v zhizn´ molodezhi [On the Work of the Komsomol Committees of Pskov Province Concerning the Atheist Education of Young Men and Women and the Impact of New Rituals on Local Youth]," (1986). RGASPI-M [Russian State Archive of Historical and Political Documents: Centre for the Documents of Youth Organisations], f. 1, op. 95, d. 371, l. 12-25.

20. Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Politics in the Nation State* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

21. N.R. Levinson, "Okhrana vnemuzeinykh pamiatnikov [On the Preservation of Monuments Outside Museums]," *Sovetskii muzei* 6 (1932): 54, 57.

22. See, for example, the reference to the Church of the Resurrection ("Saviour on the Blood") in Leningrad as such a "counter-revolutionary monument" in an article sent to *Leningradskaia pravda* by a manual worker in 1938: G.A. Tiurin, "Ob ispol´zovanii zdanii zakrytykh tserkvei i

Haymarket mainly related to generalities about the need to move forward, rather than backward, in city planning.[23] While people did not argue, in the 1970s and early 1980s, that churches should be rebuilt because they were churches (this development came only at the very end of Soviet power), the sense of what a church might stand for shifted from the early Soviet position (ideologically suspect unless demonstrated otherwise). More and more churches were recognised as architecturally important, irrespective of their original function.[24]

This radical shift in perception and taste operated on a variety of different levels. As is well known, the Brezhnev era saw official encouragement being given to the celebration of heritage in academic and museum work, city planning, and "propaganda" in the broadest sense (officially-published literature and the arts, journalism, and cultural work with "the Soviet masses").[25] De-Stalinisation under Khrushchev had undermined not only the governing myth of the former leader's inalienable virtue and puissance, previously a central force for collective identity and social solidarity, but also the underlying principle of any political or social authority vested in such a myth, stigmatised as "the cult of personality."[26] The revival of the Lenin cult was at best a partial solution, given that Lenin had long been embalmed (both in the literal and the metaphorical sense).[27] To avoid atomisation and loss of morale, a search for alternative focuses of collective belonging was urgently required. Under Khrushchev, the proposed nostrum was the promotion of an ideology based on radical modernism, including functionalist architecture as well as space travel and socially committed, rational collectivism. As rumour had it, the leader had little patience with heritage preservation: he was said to have

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molitvennykh domov [On the Use of the Buildings of Closed Churches and Houses of Prayer]," TsGA-SPb. [Central State Archive, St. Petersburg], f. 7384, op. 33, d. 50, l. 10-13.

23. For instance, the architect Yu.A. Eliseev pointed out that the metro station was now a significant point on the square, so that new planning decisions would have to take it into consideration. TsGALI-SPb., f. 229, op. 1, d. 117, l. 21.

24. Takahashi, "Church or Museum?" describes this process with regard to two key sites, the complex of wooden churches at Kizhi and the Solovki Monastery. Both were turned into museums, the former in 1965, and the latter in 1967. As Takahashi points out, it became possible to classify religious culture as "progressive" at this period (p. 508) ; one could add that once churches had become the proper subject of "scientific investigation" (*nauka*), their status vis-à-vis "scientific atheism" also shifted.

25. This development was noted at the time by scholars such as John Dunlop and Geoffrey Hosking, and has since been extensively discussed in studies such as Alexei Elfimov, *Russian Intellectual Culture in Transition* (Münster, 2004). On heritage, see also the enormous and informative volume edited by A.S. Shchenkov, *Pamiatniki arkhitektury v Sovetskom Soiuze: ocherki istorii arkhitekturnoi restavratsii* [Monuments of Education in the Soviet Union: Studies of the History of Architectural Restoration] (M.: Pamiatniki istoricheskoi mysli, 2004).

26. For an impressive recent study of Stalin's legacy, see Polly Jones, *Myth, Memory, Trauma: Rethinking the Stalinist Past in the Soviet Union* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

27. The Lenin cult in the post-Stalin era richly deserves specialist study; an outline account of the cult's broad history is Nina Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983). For an excellent recent history of the issues raised by de-Stalinisation, see Jones, *Myth, Memory, Trauma*.

responded to a visit to Trakai Castle in Lithuania by remarking sardonically on the waste of money spent on restoring those old buildings.[28]

The 1960s saw the redevelopment of entire urban areas, the projects that set the tone being the construction of the radically functionalist New Arbat avenue in Moscow, with its streamlined shop frontages and mid-rise towers, and the insertion of Mikhail Posokhin's geometrical Palace of Congresses into the Kremlin (1961).[29] If all old buildings were threatened by the modernising tides, churches were particularly likely to be swept away. They were not just useless; they stood for the backward values that were being targeted by radical atheism, promoted by the Party leadership since 1954, and by the new crackdown on religious worship initiated by an anti-clerical drive beginning in 1959. Not surprisingly, "cultic" structures were prominent among the buildings summarily demolished.[30]

Not since 1941 had the Soviet Union seen such an aggressive assault on religious architecture. The difference from the 1930s, however, was the commitment in the Party leadership to relatively open debate on the social changes being pushed through. The new, ruthless, attitude to the cultural landscape attracted prominent critics. On 23 August 1956, the flagship newspaper *Literaturnaia gazeta* published an open letter from writers, architects, artists, and historians under the title "In Defence of Monuments of Culture." It referred to widespread "indignation" as "wonderful monuments perish." It pointedly alluded to the destruction of heritage that had taken place in the Stalin era in order to press the case that, in the transformed world, such destruction must stop.[31] In 1962, the writer Viktor Nekrasov, one of the most influential voices of the Thaw, published an article in *Novyi Mir* in which he echoed these arguments, and unfavourably contrasted the Italian reverence for architectural heritage with the cavalier attitude to old buildings in the Soviet Union. As Nekrasov put it, "when a meeting is called to 'review the list [of protected monuments] and reduce it by 50 per cent', one feels not just astonishment, but also alarm."[32] In both these publications, the destruction and neglect of "cultic buildings" (including the Trinity Church at Ufa, demolished in 1956 to make way

28. M.G. Meierovich, *U menia poiavilas´ mechta* [I Have a Dream] (Iaroslavl´: Aleksandr Rutman, 2004), 177.

29. For an excellent discussion of the remodelling of this key area of Moscow, see Stephen Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008). On the Palace of Congresses, see Catherine Merridale, *Red Fortress: The Secret Heart of Russia's History* (London: Allen Lane, 2013).

30. For instance, in Vladimir Province, 25 per cent of the 346 non-active churches existing in 1962 were demolished. A.A. Fedotov, "Reforma prikhodskogo upravleniia i zakrytie khramov v 1960-e gody (Po materialam Ivanovskoi, Vladimirskoi i Kostromskoi oblastei) [The Reform of Paraish Management and the Closure of Churches in the 1960s (From Materials in Ivanovo, Vladimir, and Kostroma Provinces]," *Istoricheskii vestnik* 1, 12 (2001), http://krotov.info/history/20/1960/fedotov.htm.

31. "V zashchitu pamiatnikov iskusstva [In the Defence of Monuments of Art]," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 23 August 1956.

32. V. Nekrasov, "Po obe storony okeana [On Both Sides of the Ocean]," *Novyi Mir* 11 (1962): 122. This article appeared in the same number of *Novyi Mir* as Solzhenitsyn's epoch-making story *Odin den´ Ivana Denisovicha* [A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich].

for the Monument to the Friendship of the Russian and Bashkir Peoples, mentioned in the *Literaturnaya gazeta* open letter, and a group of medieval churches and a synagogue in Kiev, cited by Nekrasov) were the pivot of the entire argument.

Whatever the actual impact of Khrushchev's personal tastes on top-level policy, the political position of heritage preservation was to change significantly under Brezhnev's leadership. On 23 July 1965 came the decree of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR that established VOOPIiK, a mass-membership association modelled on VOOP (The All-Union Society for the Protection of Nature, which had a pedigree going back to 1925). The effort to involve non-professionals in the discussion of city planning had no precedent in the recent past: in Leningrad, for example, the Old St. Petersburg-New Leningrad Society, a local association of volunteers involved in heritage preservation, had closed down in 1938. At the centre of the new initiatives were relics of medieval Russia, including material with religious associations – icons (as evoked by Vladimir Soloukhin in an immensely influential essay of 1969, "Black Boards"),[33] the "white stone" churches of cities such as Vladimir and Rostov the Great, the lives of Russian saints, and so forth. Tourism to the so-called "Golden Ring" (a range of well-preserved historic sites within easy reach of Moscow, including Pereslavl´-Zalesskii, Iaroslavl´, Suzdal´, as well as Vladimir and Rostov) was extensively developed, both for foreign and domestic travellers. In the texts of excursions, it was customary to emphasise the "popular" or "folk" (*narodnoe*) character of the buildings that were visited, including ecclesiastical buildings.[34] As Petr Vail´ and Aleksandr Genis entertainingly put it, in their general study of the Soviet 1960s, this was a time when "every self-respecting intellectual put a pair of *lapti* [peasant bast shoes] on his TV, pinned a postcard of *St. George and the Dragon* to his wall, and drank garlic-flavoured vodka to the sound of the bells of Rostov."[35]

## "An Odiously Ecclesiastical Appearance": "Cultic Buildings" in Stalinist Leningrad

Given the emphasis on icons and the "bells of Rostov" in late Soviet heritage preservation, Leningrad, a place without medieval Russian remains of any description, obviously represented something of a special case. But Leningrad was also seen as a major jewel of the national heritage. Vladimir Soloukhin's essay "Letters from the Russian Museum" (1966) favourably contrasted the place with Moscow in terms of what had survived, and in 1965, a landmark publication in

33. Vladimir Soloukhin, "Chernye doski: Zapiski nachinaiushchego kollektsionera [Black Boards: Notes of a Beginning Collector]," (1969): see e.g. his *Slavianskaia tetrad´* [Slavonic Notebook] (M.: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1972).

34. I recall this myself in Novgorod in 1980; the same was true of a trip to Vladimir in 1980, when particular attention was drawn to the little animal sculptures outside the Cathedral of St. Demetrios, as works of "folk art."

35. P. Vail´, A. Genis, *1960-e: mir sovetskogo chekoveka* [The 1960s: The World of the Soviet Person] (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1988), 218.

*Literary Gazette* by the medievalist, and soon-to-be leading heritage campaigner, Dmitry Likhachev, argued vehemently that it was essential to preserve the city's historic vertical skyline.[36] The city had, in any case, a well-established preservation lobby with a history going back well before 1917.[37] Yet at the same time, churches had traditionally played at best a marginal role in this established history of Leningrad preservation, which had tended to focus primarily on secular buildings.[38]

As Leningrad was transformed into a "model socialist city" from 1931 onwards, large numbers of historic churches were demolished. There was a significant and noisy local lobby of radical atheists, as expressed in the activities of the "League of the Militant Godless," and the city (uniquely in the USSR) had not one but two anti-religious museums (the Museum of the History of Religion, housed in the former Kazan´ Cathedral, and the Anti-Religious Museum, in the St. Isaac's Cathedral).[39] But while the "militant godless" made a significant contribution to the harassment of believers and closure of "cultic buildings," the demolition of these buildings was caused by a whole variety of factors, including the demands of the "military-industrial bloc," of local planners, and of local soviets' efforts to improve infrastructure at the micro level.[40] With the multiple voices in favour of reusing structures that had "no purpose," or recycling materials from these, the monuments protection bodies (the Department for Museums and the Protection of Monuments, the State Restoration Workshops, and other offices of Glavnauka, and from 1937, Lensovet's own Department for the Preservation of Monuments), had limited room for manoeuvre. Preservationists had, in any case, an agenda of their own: they wanted to rid the city of "ugly" buildings as well as to preserve ones of outstanding beauty. Their hierarchy of values was driven by a commitment to architecture of the so-called "Golden Age" – the Baroque, and above all neo-classical, buildings of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Certain churches – such as St. Isaac's Cathedral, which was simultaneously an anti-religious museum and a museum of architecture – were the focus of close attention and warm concern; others were of much less significance.[41] The Church of the Saviour on the Haymarket (begun in 1753) was an official monument, but of low rank. In 1929, after the introduction of categories in 1928, it was placed in the third of four categories, and in 1930,

36. Soloukhin's article was republished in his *Slavianskaia tetrad´*. D.S. Likhachev, "Chetvertoe izmerenie [The Fourth Dimension]," *Literaturnaia gazeta* 68 (10 June 1965): 2.

37. On this, see e.g. Katerina Clark, *Petersburg, Crucible of Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Emily Johnson, *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself: The Russian Idea of Kraevedenie* (University Park, PA : Pensylvania State University Press, 2006); G.A. Popova, *Muzei Goroda v Anichkovom dvortse: Sobytiia, sud´by, kollektsii* [The City Museum in Anichkov Palace: Events, Personal Histories, Collections] (SPb.: Muzei istorii Sankt-Peterburga, 1998).

38. As argued in Catriona Kelly, "Socialist Churches: The Preservation of 'Cultic Buildings' in Leningrad, 1924-1940," *Slavic Review* 71, 2 (Winter, 2012): 792-823.

39. For a good outline account of the League of the Militant Godless in Leningrad, see N.B. Lebina, "Deiatel´nost´ 'voinstvuiushchikh bezbozhnikov' i ikh sud´ba [The Activities of the 'Militant Godless' and Their Fate]," *Voprosy istorii* 5-6 (1996): 154-157.

40. Kelly, "Socialist Churches."

41. For a detailed discussion of this period, see Kelly, "Socialist Churches."

further downgraded to the bottom category. In 1935, it was removed from the list of monuments altogether.[42] In 1936, the Architectural and Planning Board of Lensovet informed the local district soviet that since the restructuring of the Haymarket was part of the 1935 General Plan for the Reconstruction of Leningrad, and since the church had been "much spoilt by later alterations," the Department for the Preservation of Monuments would not object to its demolition.[43]

The fact was that for the Leningrad intelligentsia in the pre-war period, church architecture was of little intrinsic interest. Famous masterpieces such as Fel´ten's neo-Gothic church commemorating the victory at Chesme were admired, but part of the point was that they lacked what a document of 1931 described as "an odiously ecclesiastical appearance."[44] Almost everything built after 1850 (for some observers, 1825) excited distaste.[45] Naturally, so-called "eclectic architecture" was despised (in tune with the general contempt for all buildings in this style).[46] But with the exception of Marian Peretiatkovich's memorial church to the sailors who perished at Tsusima, the so-called 'Saviour on the Waters' (Spas na vodakh), even modernist churches were regarded with disfavour.[47] Alfred Parland's Church of the Resurrection ("the Saviour on the Blood") was considered important for its mosaics, rather than architecturally, and the monuments preservation authorities made no great efforts to save it when it was earmarked for demolition in 1938.[48]

The war years had already witnessed a considerable revival of interest, at the all-Soviet level, in medieval church architecture, once this started to come under assault by the enemy. A report from Novgorod filed in January 1944 even classified churches, traditionally branded "havens of obscurantism" in Soviet rhetoric, along with "institutions of political education":

> The German barbarians have destroyed all the institutions of political education and objects of material value, for instance, in the city of Novgorod, the monument

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42. TsGALI-SPb., f. 32, op. 1, d. 61, l. 78-87 (1929), l. 4-15 (1930). The categories ran from "highest" to "third"; the Church of the Saviour was in Category 2 in the 1929 list, and Category 3 in the 1930 list. For the 1935 list, see TsGA-SPb., f. 7384, op. 33, d. 74, l. 12-15, and for the 1938 list, GARF, f. 259, op. 37, d. 304, l. 31-32. See also the online "Appendix" to Kelly, "Socialist Churches," http://oxford.academia.edu/CatrionaKelly.

43. TSGALI-SPb., f. 9. op. 1, d. 2, l. 158.

44. TsGA-SPb., f. 7384, op. 33, d. 76, l. 36.

45. The members of the Narkompros preservation bodies in the early 1920s (led by Konstantin Romanov) had taken 1850 as the cut-off dates, but for Lev Il´in and his associates in city planning, it was the neo-classicism of Rossi and Zakharov that was canonical. I discuss this in *Socialist Churches*, Chapter 3.

46. See e.g. *Leningrad: Putevoditel´* [Leningrad: A Guidebook] (2nd edn.; 2 vols.; M. - L.: OGIZ, 1933), vol. 1, 251, which dismisses the style as "a compromise between gentry and bourgeois architecture."

47. Peretyatkovich's church appeared on a list of 1927 (TsGANTD-SPb., f. 192, op. 3-1, d. 9277, ll. 459-462), but was not listed in 1929 (TsGALI-SPb., f. 32, op. 1, d. 61, ll. 78-87). It was demolished in 1932. For the later history of the structure, including efforts to reconstruct it (a chapel was built on the foundations in 2002-2007), see the official website, http://www.spas-na-vodah.spb.ru/ (last accessed 29 August 2013).

48. TsGA-SPb., f. 7384, op. 33, d. 76, l. 36.

> to the Millennium of Russia has been destroyed, and also the eighteenth-century Palace Tower, the twelfth-century Church of St. Theodore Stratilates, etc., also the library of the city of Novgorod, which had more than 80,000 books in it. The golden domes of the St. Sophia and St. George Cathedrals have been carried off to Germany.[49]

In Leningrad, damage to churches did not have the same symbolic weight as damage to secular buildings, in particular the palaces of Pushkin (Tsarskoe Selo), Pavlovsk, and Peterhof, the objects of lavishly sponsored state restoration programmes.[50] Damage to churches did not get space in propaganda texts, and even when it affected buildings of acknowledged architectural importance, was usually rectified slowly. The Cathedral of the Trinity in the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, for instance, remained roofless as late as 1956, when restoration sponsored by the Moscow Patriarchate, rather than the state, was finally put in train.[51] The heritage preservation body retained many of the same officials as in the 1930s, and attitudes had changed little.[52] There were almost no new listings of historic churches.[53] Demolitions of churches continued – in 1948, the Church of Saints Zachary and Elizabeth on ulitsa Kalyaeva (Zakhar'evskaya ulitsa) was

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49. "Spravka o sostoianii narodnogo obrazovaniia v raionakh oblasti, osvobozhdennykh ot nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov [A Note on the State of Popular Education in the Districts Liberated from the German Fascist Invaders]," January 1944 (exact date not given), TsGAIPD-SPb., f. 24, op. 11, d. 198, l. 1-2.

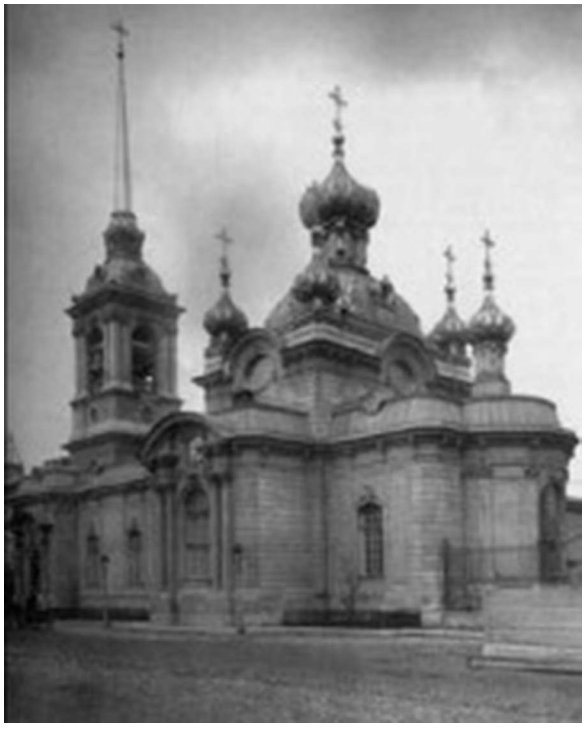
50. On preservation of the palaces, see e.g. A.A. Kedrinsky, M.G. Kolotov, L.A. Medersky, A.G. Raskin, *Letopis´ vozrozhdeniia: Vosstanovlenie pamiatnikov arkhitektury Leningrada i prigorodov, razrushennykh v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny nemetsko-fashistskimi zakhvatchikami* [Chronicle of a Resurrection: The Restoration of Architectural Monuments in Leningrad and its Environs Destroyed in the Great Patriotic War by the German Fascist Invaders] (L.: Izd. literatury po stroitel´stvu, 1971); A.A. Kedrinskii, M.G. Kolotov, B.N. Ometov, and A.G. Raskin, *Vosstanovlenie pamiatnikov arkhitektury Leningrada* [The Restoration of the Architectural Monuments of Leningrad] (L.: Stroiizdat, 1983); B.M. Kirikov, *Okhrana arkhitekturnykh pamiatnikov Leningrada v gody sovetskoi vlasti* [The Preservation of the Architectural Monuments of Leningrad during the Years of Soviet Power](L.: Znanie, 1988); *Okhrana pamiatnikov Sankt-Peterburga: K 90-letiiu Komiteta po gosudarstvennomu kontroliu, ispol´zovaniiu i okhrane pamiatnikov istorii i kul´tury Sankt-Peterburga* [The Preservation of the Monuments of St. Petersburg: To Honour the 90th Anniversary of the Committee for the State Control, Exploitation, and Preservation of Monuments of History and Culture, St. Petersburg] (SPb.: Propilei, 2008); Steven Maddox, "'Healing the Wounds': Commemorations, Myths, and the Restoration of Leningrad's Imperial Heritage, 1941-1950," Ph.D Thesis, University of Toronto, 2008.

51. ASPbE [Arkhiv Sankt-Peterburgskoi Eparkhii], f. 1, op. 7, d. 40, l. 37-42.

52. Two leading figures were Nikolai Belekhov (1904-1956), who in the late 1930s worked as the chief architect in the Department for the Protection of Monuments at Lensovet, and who headed GIOP from 1941 until his death (for a detailed account of his biography, see Maddox, "'Healing the Wounds'"); and Sergei Pobedonostsev, who headed the Department for the Protection of Monuments from 1937 until 1941 (when he was called up for military service), and who took over as head of GIOP in the years after Belekhov's death. Pobedonostsev still regularly took part in meetings of the Scientific Council of GIOP in the late 1960s.

53. In the official list of 1947, the only three examples of "cultic buildings" not listed in 1938 were the Church of St. Il´ya the Prophet (1782-6, by Nikolai L´vov), the Anglican Church on nab. Krasnogo Flota, and the "Masonic Church." TsGA-SPb., f. 9620, op. 2, d. 1, l. 55-55 ob.

pulled down.[54] As this case showed, the principles of the 1935 General Plan of Leningrad remained in force: this had envisaged that much of the historic fabric of the city would remain unchanged, except for "partial alterations (demolition of small-scale structures, corner buildings) in some individual cases, in order to facilitate transport flow and to improve the architectural realisation of certain streets and squares."[55] Churches were among the "individual cases" that were envisaged.[56]



The neo-Baroque Church of SS Zachary and Elizabeth, remodelled by the leading architect L.N. Benua (Benois) in 1897-1899, and demolished in 1948. Photographed before 1917. <www.bcex.ru>

54. See the information on this church in Vladimir Antonov and Aleksandr Kobak, *Sviatyni Sankt-Peterburga* [Sacred Places of St. Petersburg] (3rd ed.; SPb. : Liki Rossii, 2010).

55. "General´nyi plan razvitiia Leningrada [General Plan for the Development of Leningrad]," TsGA-SPb., f. 7384, op. 20, d. 1, l. 17.

56. This policy was endorsed at the centre. See e.g. the documentation relating to the Church of the Saviour Not Made by Human Hands in the Volkovo Cemetery: on 2 August 1935, the Architecture and Planning Board (APU) of Lensovet stated that it had no objection to the building's demolition, but on 28 October 1935, VTsIK replied, "This memorandum [*spravka*] is not sufficient for our purposes. We require accurate information about whether the church is included in the plan for the reconstruction of the city and the cemetery." (TsGA-SPb., f. 7384, op. 33, d. 177, l. 11, 14).

Part of the background to this was that attitudes to the Orthodox Church were still at best guarded, despite the 1943 concordat between church and state. Only two Leningrad churches were opened in the post-war years, and GIOP took a tough line with religious communities using buildings that were listed monuments.[57] In the Khrushchev era, relations briefly improved (the Trinity Cathedral in the Alexander Nevsky Monastery reopened for worship in 1957).[58] However, during the emergence of the harsher line in the late 1950s, Leningrad became a haven for radical secularism, the site of the Soviet Union's first "Palace of Marriages," an institution whose primary aim was to reduce the allure of the church wedding.[59] The Plenipotentiary of the Council of the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church put a great deal of administrative effort into pressurising church congregations, with a view to accelerating closures.[60] GIOP maintained its former slightly hostile neutrality to church architecture, dropping from its lists the eighteenth-century Church of St. Alexander Nevsky at Ust´-Izhora, and doing nothing to obstruct the demolition of the Church of the Saviour on the Haymarket, though a member of GIOP's Learned Council, the architectural historian Professor V.I. Piliavskii, did organise a protest meeting in the late autumn of 1960 in the Leningrad Engineering and Building Institute (LISI), after a publication in *Leningradskaia pravda* had gleefully announced the removal of this "disgraceful blot" from Haymarket Square.[61]

As late as 1965, attitudes to church architecture, among professional architects, were often cautious. A letter to the Deputy Chairman of Lensovet's Executive Committee drafted by members of LOSA's Department for the Preservation of Monuments in 1965 noted the importance of the Sampson Cathedral on what was

57. For a useful discussion of church-state relations in the post-war years, see Elena V. Shun´gina, "Politika Sovetskogo gosudarstva v otnoshenii Rossiiskoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi v 1940-1950 gg: vozvrashchenie kul´tovykh zdanii tserkvi (po materialam Leningrada). Dissertatsiia na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni kandidata istoricheskikh nauk [The Politics of the Soviet State with Regard to the Russian Orthodox Church in the 1940s and 1950s: the Return of Cultic Buildings (A Case Study of Leningrad). Dissertation for the Candidate of Historical Sciences Degree]," Russian Academy of Sciencies, Institute of History, St. Petersburg, 2009. Archive of the Institute of History, RAN. Item (ed. khr.) 398. My thanks to Professor Boris Kolonitsky for arranging access to this item. For a brief discussion of GIOP's attitudes, see Catriona Kelly, "Competing Orthodoxies: Identity and Religious Belief in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia," in Mark Bassin and Catriona Kelly, eds., *Soviet and Post-Soviet Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

58. For a discussion of this episode, see Shun´gina, "Politika," 83-85.

59. On the Palace of Marriages, see K.L. Emel´ianova, *Pervyi v strane* [The First in the Country] (L.: Lenizdat, 1964).

60. See e.g. G. Zharinov, "O prazdnike paskhe v 1962 g. [On the Easter Celebrations in 1962]," letter to the Chairman of the Council on the Affairs of the ROC, 11 May 1962, TsGAIPD-SPb., f. 25, op. 89, d. 80, l. 37-38.

61. For a description of this episode, not documented in any of the archival material I have come across, see V. Smirnov, "Skvernaia istoriia [A Nasty Story]," *Neva* 3 (2004), http://magazines.russ.ru/neva/2004/3/smir19.html. Piliavskii also chaired the meeting of LOSA on 2 July 1975 (TsGALI-SPb., f. 229, op. 1, d. 117, l. 34), but did not contribute to the discussion.

then Marx prospekt (now Great Sampson prospekt). "Begun in 1728 as a memorial to the Battle of Poltava," this was a "unique" building that attracted tourists even though it had never undergone "scientific restoration," and was being used as a warehouse. The letter recommended that the building be transferred to the local district soviet and used for "social and cultural purposes," after "a mandatory complete scientific restoration" had taken place. It would appear that the letter was never actually sent: the copy of the letter in the LOSA archive is endorsed with the comment,

> Aleksandr Lukich!
> Referring to the Sampson Cathedral (and in connection with the objection of K.A. Pavlova [the head of GIOP], who is in charge of the building), Korobkov considers that it would be better not to send this letter.[62]

The writer of this comment continued, '"I don't agree myself," but the hesitation reflected the still uncertain status of efforts to ensure that empty churches (as opposed to those used for worship) were properly restored.

Yet by the end of the year, LOSA was receiving, without apparent consternation, a fiery document from two specialists in history of art, Professor N.A. Kozhin and P.E. Kornilov, "To Preserve the Beauty of Leningrad," which vehemently attacked the demolition of the Saviour on the Haymarket, concluding, "The entire square has been wrecked."[63] And a just a few years later, a thorough-going rapprochement even with church architecture of the late Imperial era had taken place. Take, for instance, the effort made by VOOPIiK in 1972 to compel the Leningrad city authorities to take in hand the restoration of the neo-Byzantine Church-Mausoleum of the Kazan´ Icon of the Mother of God at the former New Maidens' Convent (Novodevichii monastyr´) on Moskovskii prospekt. Built by Vasilii Kosiakov, a leader of architectural revivalism, the church was (and is) imposing and richly decorated, but it had never been an official monument. Writing to the City Architect of Leningrad, Gennadyi Buldakov, on 11 February 1972, however, Boris Piotrovskii, Chairman of VOOPIiK, dwelled precisely on the building's exceptional merits:

> The building of the Mausoleum [...] is of great architectural and artistic value; it has six domes and is on a square plan; it is richly decorated with art ceramics and carving, and the domes have a magnificent ceramic covering on a lead lining.[64]

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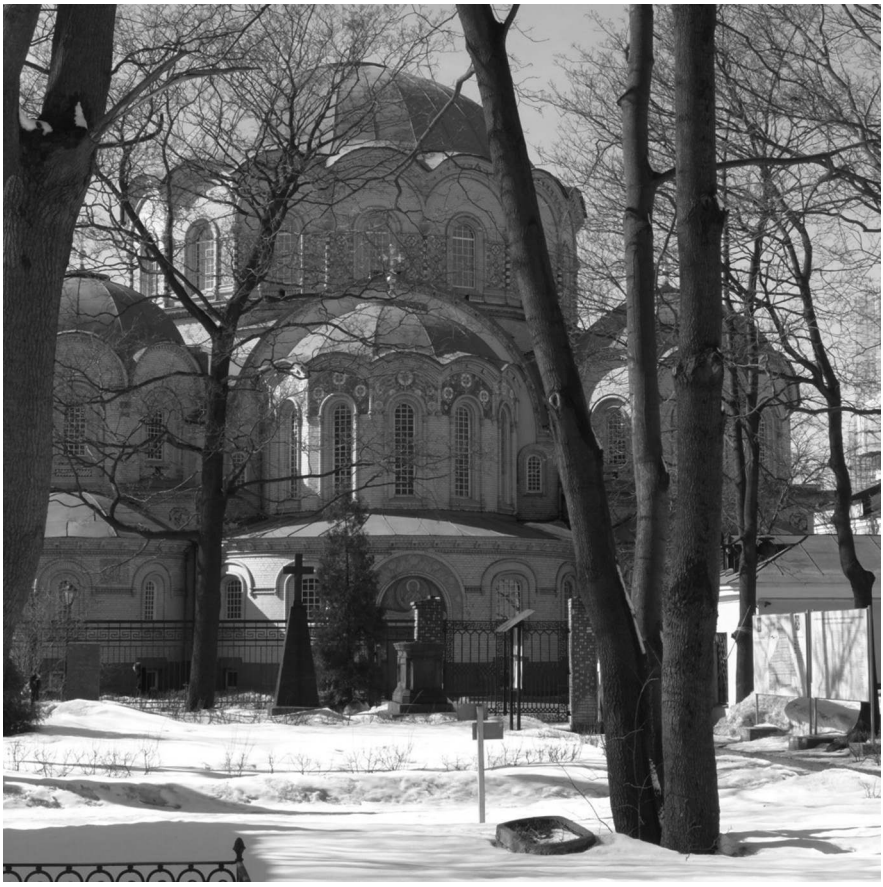
62. TsGALI-SPb, f. 341, op. 1, d. 691, l. 3. S.V. Korobkov was the official in GIOP who was to be sent a copy of the letter; by 1967, he himself was the head of GIOP (TsGANTD-SPb., f. 386, op. 1, d. 31, l. 86).

63. Ibid., l. 38.

64. TsGALI-SPb., f. 229, op. 1, d. 72, l. 22.



The Mausoleum (Church of the Kazan´ Mother of God)
at the New Maiden Convent, St. Petersburg (Vasilii Kosiakov, 1908-1912).
Photograph Catriona Kelly, 2013.

From the point of view of traditional Petersburg preservationism, the Mausoleum was triply odious: it was unmistakably a church, and in an architectural style that was considered alien to local tradition; in its exuberant, free-standing bulk, it was out of kilter with the "severe" ensembles (such as Rossi's General Staff Building) that were held to manifest the summit of architectural achievement.[65] In November 1928, the Mausoleum was placed on a list of churches scheduled for demolition, so that the bricks they were built of could be recycled, and the then head of Glavnauka (the Narkompros section

65. L. Il´in, "Ansambl´ v arkhitekturnom oblike Leningrada [The *ansambl´* in the Architectural History of Leningrad]," *Arkhitektura SSSR* 2 (1933), 9-11.

responsible for the preservation of monuments) had described it as being "of no artistic or historical significance."[66]

## Leningrad Preservationism in the Brezhnev Era: New Canons for a New Establishment

The reasons underlying the growing reverence for ecclesiastical architecture were complex, involving local as well as national factors, and shifts in both political structure and mentality. In retrospect, Leningrad preservationism in the Brezhnev era has often been taken as primarily a form of licit opposition to the regime, a way of expressing broadly-based hostility in a forum licensed by official policy.[67] It is certainly true that a motif that came up regularly in 1970s protests was the failure of the authorities to consult. An example was Boris Piotrovskii's letter to Gennadyi Buldakov, quoted earlier, which went on to observe that the project for reconstructing the New Maidens' Convent and Cemetery "was approved in 1967, *without the general public's being given the chance to discuss it*" [emphasis added].[68] (One can compare Valentina Malakhieva's observation, quoted in my opening paragraphs here, that the protests over the demolition of the Church of Saints Boris and Gleb had simply been ignored.) It would be reasonable to suppose that at least some advocates of preservation were motivated by exactly this kind of scruple about the non-democratic character of governance.

However, the sense that the public ought to be consulted was itself the result of official policy. The Brezhnev-era debates over preservation were a phenomenon *of* the establishment, as well as an anti-establishment phenomenon. As befitted a movement that was not just sanctioned, but positively encouraged, by the authorities, VOOPIiK was permeated by the Soviet "great and good." The chairman of its Leningrad section, Boris Piotrovskii, came from a dynasty of leading archaeologists, and had been, since 1964, the Director of the Hermitage, the premier cultural post in the city. Practically everyone on VOOPIiK's board in Leningrad (with the exception of financial administrators, a traditionally menial role) was a Party member.[69]

But if VOOPIiK's primary function at its highest levels was to express the views of the cream of the Leningrad "official" intelligentsia, the historical revival also

66. TsGA-SPb., f. 3199, op. 2, d. 428, l. 6-7.

67. See e.g. the comments by Alexander Kobak on the entire preservationist movement as "anti-Communist" in the 2006 TV film *The Twilight of a Big City* (later removed from circulation after adverse comments from then governor Valentina Matvienko that it was "not timely").

68. Letter from B.B. Piotrovskii to the Chief Architect of Leningrad, G.N. Buldakov, 11 February 1972, TsGALI-SPb., f. 229, op. 1, d. 72, l. 22.

69. See for example "Spisok razovyi rukovdoiashchego sostava LGO VOOPIiK [List of the Staff of the Board of Management of the Leningrad City Section of VOOPIiK]," (1985), which indicates that 12 out of 14 people holding official positions in the organisation's administration were Party members; the non-party members included the society's accountant and the head of its "social inspectorate." TsGALI-SPb. f. 229, op. 1, d. 563, l. 97.

drew in large numbers of Leningraders who would not willingly have co-operated with the authorities on any other issue.[70] For its part, VOOPIiK was more than an on-paper organisation that people remember having to belong to whether they chose to do so or not.[71] It was also a serious and effective social force, comparable with the war veterans' associations that Mark Edele's work has portrayed as a significant feature of the political landscape at this period.[72]

A further contributing factor was that, from 1966 onwards (after assignation of relations with "cults" to the Council on Religious Affairs of the Central Committee), attitudes to the official Orthodox Church became considerably less aggressive, both across the Soviet Union generally, and in Leningrad. Militancy on the part of officials started to be directed mainly at the so-called "sectarians," particularly illegal (unregistered) groups of Baptists, as well as at Orthodox dissidents.[73] Certainly, efforts were still made to stop young people from participating in acts of worship even of the semi-tolerated denominations, such as the Orthodox Church, but systematic harassment of these became less common.[74] This partial appeasement with Orthodoxy was one of the reasons why religious art and church architecture could now become more prominent in academic and popular discussions, and why the locution "Church Slavonic" (rather than "Old Slavonic") was now permissible.[75]

But the late 1960s and early 1970s was not just a period of institutional and social change. The period also witnessed a shift in aesthetic perceptions. As the local historian Alexander D. Margolis recalled in 2007:

> I spent my entire childhood living on the Griboedov Canal Embankment, opposite the Saviour on the Blood. I think we moved from there in 1964, yes. And my entire childhood was accompanied by talk about what a hideous church it was and how it

70. On this, see Oxf/AHRC SPb-07 PF2 CK (interview with Alexander Margolis).

71. It was, admittedly, also this: see e.g. Oxf/AHRC-SPb-08 PF46 ANK (woman b. 1969, interviewed by Anna Kushkova): "Suppose there's a collection, some membership dues or whatever for the monuments protection society. So, say, someone from work turns up and says, 'Give me 50 kopecks.' I've no idea what society she's talking about, and […] I'm not bothered about protecting monuments either, given the state does that very well by itself. Why should I hand over 50 kopecks? But there was all this stuff about collectivism, common rules, and so on, and not coughing up was just not done. So you did cough up."

72. Mark Edele, *Soviet Veterans of the Second World War: A Popular Movement in an Authoritarian Society, 1941-1991* (Oxford, 2008).

73. Material from the archive of the Plenipotentiary for Religious Affairs in Leningrad (see TsGA-SPb., f. 2017, op. 1, d. 3 (1966), d. 18 (1969), etc.) confirms this picture of passivity with reference to Orthodoxy. For discussion of the action against "sectarians" contemporary with the events, see particularly the work of Michael Bourdeaux, for instance *Aida of Leningrad: The Story of Aida Skripnikova* (London: Mowbrays, 1976).

74. For instance, in 1970 a report from the Leningrad Plenipotentiary on Religious Affairs, G. Zharinov, to the Council on Religious Affairs in Moscow reported that the numbers of young people lighting candles in the churches of Leningrad over Easter was a worrying development (even if some young people could be found using the candles to light their cigarettes): "Dokladnaia zapiska o prazdnovanii v tserkvakh Leningrada paskhi v 1970 godu [Report on the Celebration of Easter in Leningrad Churches, 1970]," (19 May 1970), TsGA-SPb., f. 2017, op. 1, 3, 24, l. 56-58.

75. As in D.S. Likhachev's discussions of Old Russian literature, for example.

> would be a great idea to blow it up, simply get rid of it. [...] In the 1960s, you could have counted on the fingers of one hand the people who thought that church was worth keeping. There's been a complete transformation of people's attitudes.[76]

In fact, below the surface, the transformation began before Leonid Il´ich took over as General Secretary. The new hardline attitude to religious belief after 1959 was not of particular concern to the Leningrad intelligentsia in a broad sense, though it certainly impacted on the lives of believers themselves. However, the demolitions of churches did now attract attention, as part of a rise in the sensitivity to the loss of historic buildings of all kinds. The architect Yury Kurbatov was later to remember that the 1961 demolition of the Saviour on the Haymarket Church, and the razing in 1962 of the Greek Orthodox Church (built in 1861-1865 to a neo-Byzantine style by R.I. Kuz´min), along with the dismantling of the Ruska Portico during construction of the Gostinyi Dvor metro station in 1962, and the destruction of the Pirogov Museum a few years later, pushed him and many of his friends into a radical stance.[77]

During the Brezhnev years, the swell of feeling against cultural destruction began to rise. In 1966, Joseph Brodskii's poem "Halt in the Desert," one of the poet's first masterpieces, represented the demolition of the Greek Church as the onset of new barbarism. The poem indignantly juxtaposed the memory enshrined in this building, and the mechanical, compulsive return to former haunts exemplified by a dog pissing in its accustomed place:

> One day, when we no longer are,
> more accurately, after us, and in our place
> will rise up also something of a kind
> to horrify all those who knew us.
> But by that time there won't be many such.
> Thus, for old memory's sake, a dog
> Will cock its leg in the familiar place.[78]

Here, recollection was reduced to a Pavlovian reaction, a kind of "pre-cortical" memory. Conversely, the destruction of the church itself stood for "false memory syndrome" on a city-wide scale, the start of a new, illiterate, "Dark Age."

The poet Boris Ivanov later recalled the text's extraordinary impact on Brodsky's generation.

> He read some sad and bitter verses about the destruction of an *Orthodox* church in the centre of Leningrad, and not in Stalin's times – but in our own. It was not

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76. AHRC-SPb.-07 PF2 CK (interview by Catriona Kelly with Alexander Margolis).

77. Yu.I. Kurbatov, "Istoricheskaia sreda i kontseptual´nost´ novykh form. Opyt Leningrada 1970-kh – 1980-kh godov [The Historical Environment and the Conceptualisation of New Forms. Architectural Practice in Leningrad in the 1970s and the 1980s]," in B.M. Kirikov and L.V. Kornilova, eds., *Pamiatniki istorii i kul´tura Sankt-Peterburga* (SPb.: Beloe i chernoe, 2005), 398-401.

78. Iosif [Joseph] Brodskii, "Ostanovka v pustyne [Halt in the Desert]," *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy* [Lyric and Narrative Poems], ed. Lev Losev (2 vols.; M.: Vita Nova, 2011), vol. 1, 210.

> a rebuke to the distant past, but a rebuke to all of us, since we had succumbed to cultural anaemia and memory loss. This was not the versifying of a politician; it was the discourse of a prophet invoking the vacant spaces in our spiritual life.[79]

As the cultural critic Igor´ Smirnov remembered, Brodsky and his immediate circle were not preoccupied with spiritual values in the sense of traditional religious ones. They preferred to live for the moment: "Conversations about higher things weren't tolerated: Soviet propaganda had usurped them."[80] At this point, the Greek Church was less important as a "church" than as a token of the European associations of Leningrad (Petersburg).[81] But the next generation – the so-called "1970-ers" – had a much closer sympathy with the religious meaning of church buildings. In their case, a major revival of interest in religio-philosophical traditions – and in Orthodoxy as part of this – went with a passionate absorption in the aesthetics of early modernism.[82] Naturally, intellectuals who took a vivid interest in the activities of the early twentieth-century Religious-Philosophical Society, and who were deep admirers of Orthodox thinkers such as Father Sergii Bulgakov and Father Pavel Florenskii, were unlikely to take a hostile view of modernist churches. And it was precisely in the late 1970s that an extraordinarily important work of recuperation aimed at church architecture – the study eventually published by Vladimir Antonov and Aleksandr Kobak as *The Sacred Places of Petersburg* - began to take shape.[83] In this publication, the churches of the immediately pre-revolutionary period, including *style russe* buildings such as the Church of the Protection of the Mother of God on Lieutenant Schmidt Embankment (Vasilii Kosiakov, 1895-1897) were treated just as reverently as those in the previously canonical neo-classical style.

It was not just among cerebral members of the self-styled "unofficial culture" that values were changing. A shift in aesthetic perceptions was making itself felt within "official" culture too. In 1966, after the passing of the most significant new

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79. Boris Ivanov, "Po tu storonu ofitsial´nosti [Beyond Official Culture], » *Sochineniia* [Works[ (M. : NLO, 2009). Vol. 2, 412. Emphasis original.

80. Igor´ Smirnov, *Deistvuiushchie litsa* [Dramatis Personae] (SPb.: Petropolis, 2008), p. 22. My thanks to the author for providing a copy of this material.

81. Compare the very limited interest shown by Brodskii in the two important churches, the Cathedral of the Transfiguration and the St. Panteleimon Church, visible from the building in which he grew up, the Muruzi House, in his memoir *Less Than One* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987).

82. See Josephine von Zitzewitz, "The 'Religious Renaissance' of the 1970s and its Repercussions on the Soviet Literary Process," D.Phil Thesis, University of Oxford, 2009. Several of the figures dealt with here, including Elena Shvarts and Viktor Krivulin, were Leningraders.

83. The first edition of *Sviatyni Peterburga*, in three volumes, came out in 1994, and there have been two new editions, expanded and corrected, since. In an interview conducted by me in 2009 (Oxf/AHRC SPb-09 PF10 CK), Aleksandr Kobak described the process of researching the book, whose topic was not conveyed to the staffs of the archives where he and Antonov worked (instead, their declared topic was "the public buildings of Leningrad"). However, as Kobak observes, the pair "only ever ordered material on churches," so that the archivists "must have understood pretty well what we were up to" – a further indication of a general shift in values. The manuscript was then smuggled out to Paris in 1983, but the hoped-for appearance of the book was delayed by the inability of Nikita Struve, the director of the YMCA Press, to obtain funding (perhaps, one assumes, because of the size and complexity of the manuscript).

legislation on monument protection since the late 1940s, GIOP added a number of important early twentieth-century buildings to the list of protected architecture, among them Vitebsk Station and its opulent restaurant hall, apartment blocks such as the Emir of Bukhara's House, banks, and department stores.[84] Over the following years, architectural journals began to give more and more space to buildings in the *style moderne*.[85] Such buildings were also accorded increasing prominence in guidebooks. A guidebook published in 1967 repeated the usual accusations.

> In the capitalist era, not one architectural ensemble was created. What is more, the ensembles from earlier eras, the period of the flowering of Russian architecture, began to be destroyed. Capitalism led architecture up a blind alley.

Yet this guidebook also prominently reproduced, without any negative commentaries, photographs of leading modernist buildings, such as the Eliseev Stores.[86] After some hesitation in GIOP, it was decided to include "monuments of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries" in the official album, *Monuments of Leningrad*, published in 1968.[87] L.S. Aleshina's *Leningrad and Its Surroundings*, published in 1980, a joint edition with an East German publishing house, and by far the most inclusive pocket guide to the city's architecture produced since 1917, represented a real watershed, in that it avoided evaluative comments of any kind (though Aleshina did provide a prudently sententious introduction). The movement from judgement to information was typical of mainstream historical writing at this period too.[88]

As the institutional and conceptual background changed, the policy in GIOP towards churches also gradually began to shift. On 4 April 1966, the Inspectorate's Learned Council resolved to re-confer the status of monument on the Church of Aleksandr Nevsky in Ust´-Izhora, delisted in 1960.[89] Certainly, policy remained

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84. "Protokol zasedaniia Uchenogo Soveta GIOP [Minutes of the Meetning of the Learned Council of GIOP]," 10 January 1966, TsGANTD-SPb., f. 386, op. 1, d. 13, l. 1-3.

85. See e.g. G. Lisovsky, "Master shkoly natsional´nogo romantizma [A Master of the School of National Romanticism]," *LPan* 4 (1975): 42-44 (on N.V. Vasil´ev, architect of the mosque, whose work is also considered in A. Shchukin, "Golubye kupola mecheti [The Blue Domes of the Mosque]," *LPan* 8 (1987), 38-9); B.M. Kirikov, S.G. Fedorov, "Zodchii-entsiklopedist: O tvorcheskom puti arkh. G.V. Baranovskogo [An Encyclopaedic Architect: On the Creative Path of Arch. G. V. Baranovsky]," *LPan* 2 (1985): 29-32 (includes material on the Eliseev Store); V.G. Isachenko, "V shirokom diapazone: tvorcheskoe nasledie P.Yu. Syuzora [In Broad Focus: the Creative Heritage of P. Yu. Syuzor]," *LPan* 10 (1985): 28-31.

86. *Peterburg-Leningrad. Al´bom*, comp. G.N. Savin, text written by N.A. Bartenev (L.: Lenizdat, 1967), 12, 64-65.

87. For the discussions round the content of this book, see the materials for the meeting of the Learned Council of GIOP, 9 January 1967, TsGANTD-SPb., f. 386, op. 1, d. 31, l. 5, and the minutes of the meeting on 14 April 1967, ibid., l. 52.

88. L.S. Aleshina, *Leningrad i okrestnosti: Spravochnik-putevoditel´* [Leningrad and Its Surroundings: A Reference Guidebook] (M. – Leipzig: Iskusstvo, 1980). On developments in historical writing in the post-Stalin era, see Denis Kozlov, "The Historical Turn in Late Soviet Culture: Retrospectivism, Factography, Doubt, 1953–91," *Kritika* 2, 3 (2001): 577-600.

89. "Protokol zasedaniia Uchenogo soveta GIOP," 4 April 1966, TsGANTD-SPb., f. 386, op. 1, d. 13, l. 54.

conservative: not one of the new additions to the list of protected monuments in January 1966 included, say, a church from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.[90] In 1947, there had been 36 churches on the official list of protected monuments; in 1968, there were 35.[91] However, by the late 1960s, GIOP's inspectors were increasingly ready to intervene when industrial enterprises, scientific institutes, museums, and other bodies mistreated historic buildings that they held under lease, and pressure was also put on the lessees of churches. For example, the "post-box institute" (carrying out secret military research) that occupied the Church of Saints Simeon and Anne on Mokhovaia built by the Russian baroque architect M.G. Zemtsov in 1731-1734 was repeatedly cajoled to carry out the repainting of the façade that was required by the Inspectorate. The Director of the Museum of the Arctic and Antarctic on ulitsa Marata was nagged about the hooks for Soviet flags that had been drilled into the façade of the building it occupied, the former Church of the Co-Religionists (Edinovertsy, built by A.I. Mel´nikov in 1820-1838).[92] These efforts were largely unsuccessful, since GIOP, though a thorn in the side of church congregations and indeed local architects of modernising bent, was institutionally weak compared with the "military-industrial base" and the scientific organisations embedded into it. The Museum of the Arctic, for instance, was a subsidiary of the large and powerful Institute of the Arctic and Antarctic, a flagship of Soviet "civilising ambitions" in the North since the 1930s. But the effort to regulate lessees was significant in itself. By contrast, in the 1930s, GIOP's predecessor had allowed the lessees of the Church of Saints Simeon and Anne to remove original pillars in the interior so that a concrete proscenium arch and load-bearing beam could be inserted, while two metal, concrete and wood staircases in aggressively modernist style had been built inside the Church of the Co-Religionists.[93]

Yet even in the 1970s and 1980s, care for ecclesiastical buildings went only so far. One significant manifestation of historicism as applied to architectural monuments generally was the effort on the part of preservation bodies to ensure that such buildings should be used for their original purposes (at any rate, where these were "cultural" in nature).[94] A book published in 1981 claimed that "the most [architecturally] valuable" buildings in the city "are used in the ways envisaged by their architect creators." Among those listed were "theatres, educational institutions, covered markets, and dwelling-houses."[95] Churches were

90. "Protokol zasedaniia Uchenogo soveta GIOP,"10 January 1966, TsGANTD-SPb., f. 386, op. 1, d. 13, l. 1-3.

91. Compare TsGA-SPb., f. 9620, op. 2, d. 1, l. 55-55 ob., and TsGALI-SPb., f. 229, op. 2, d. 2, l. 1-30.

92. See the material in files no. 173 (Saints Simeon and Anne) and 481 (Co-Religionists), NA UGIOP [Scholarly Archive of the Board of the State Inspectorate for the Preservation of Monuments].

93. Ibid.

94. Obviously, it was also not proposed to turn banks back into banks, palaces into elite accommodation, and so on. That would be a development of the post-Soviet era.

95. A.S. Raskin, N.N. Vesnina, *Okhrana pamiatnikov arkhitektury Leningrada* [In Defence of the Architectural Monuments of Leningrad] (L.: Stroiizdat, 1981).

conspicuously absent from the list. Occasional suggestions from members of the public that historic church buildings might be restored to worship died in the private files of the local authorities. In 1969, a group of would-be parishioners living in and around Murino, just north of the Leningrad city boundaries, mounted a concerted and well-organised campaign for the reopening of the St. Catherine's Church (built by the leading architect Nikolai L´vov in 1786). The group's spokesman, one Georgii Ivanovich Slukhov, accumulated pages of documentation in which he detailed the rude response that he had received from a local officials ("we don't need the church, we'll pull it down, and we'll have you in one by one and then see how many of you want to go through with this"). He laid out at length his own war record, and the war record of the Orthodox Church, the millions of roubles that it had raised for tanks. The eloquence fell on deaf ears, however. Even the claims by believers that they would look after the church (which contemporary photographs indicate was in a thoroughly dilapidated condition) better than its current lessees did not produce a change of heart.[96] The suggestion that churches should reopen was treated no more favourably when it did not come from religious organisations. A letter passed by GIOP in 1970 to the Plenipotentiary on Religious Affairs put forward a suggestion that it would be historically appropriate to return the Church of the Sign in Pushkin (Tsarskoe Selo) to believers. The response came back that this was out of the question, since no believers had actually expressed an interest in the building.[97]

Just as had been the case in the 1920s and 1930s, the appropriate use for an ecclesiastical building was deemed to be "cultural education." In 1972, the Vice-President of the Presidium of the Leningrad Section of VOOPIiK, evidently in response to a request from the Central Council of the organisation, forwarded the latter a list of monuments in Leningrad and details of what purposes they were currently serving. Four of the thirteen buildings that described as being used in "impermissible" ways were churches: the Church of the Annunciation on Primorskoe Road, which was then a rubber factory; the Church of the Annunciation on 8th Line, Vasilievskii Island, which was a metal-works; the Alexander Nevsky Monastery (a scientific institute and an "experimental factory"); and the former Catholic Church of St. Stanislav, working as a warehouse.[98] But what VOOPIiK considered preferable was not ecclesiastical use, but making a structure over as an exhibition hall, as happened with Rastrelli's Smol´nyi Cathedral, and with VOOPIiK's own premises, the former Church of the Mother of God Joy of Those Who Grieve. The plans for conversion of the latter were entirely secular: a cloakroom was to be created and 'radiator cases like the ones in the House of

96. The extensive correspondence to do with the case is held in the files of VOOPIiK at TsGALI, f. 229, op. 1, d. 224, l. 1-12. Murino was a bone of contention not just at this period: there are documents on file with submissions about the church's importance and its poor condition from the late 1950s and the 1980s as well. See e.g. TsGALI-SPb., f. 229, op. 1, d. 564, l. 39-40 (representations to VOOPIiK from 1985).

97. TsGA-SPb., f. 2017, op. 1, d. 18, l. 89.

98. TsGALI-SPb., f. 229, op. 1, d. 72, l. 127-128.

Friendship' created; the windows were to have special drapes fixed up, and the parquet was to get a coat of lacquer.[99]

At the same time, unlike the "redundant" churches of which the Church of England disencumbered itself at the same period, the disused "cultic buildings" of Leningrad were not turned into living accommodation. In this respect at least, a certain sense of the sacral persisted. It was one thing to turn a former church into a temple of art, and quite another to sully it with "daily life" (*byt*) of the kind that intellectuals disapproved.[100]

## Planning for the New City

The growing historicism, and new aesthetic permissiveness, did not simply have an impact on individual buildings. It fundamentally reshaped the principles of city planning. In the days when the socialist city was being constructed, architect-planners had sought to focus city squares on secular structures. For Lev Il'in, the most important city planner of the first two decades of Soviet power, the exemplary urban space was Narva Square, with its pre-revolutionary neo-classical monument, Narva Gates, encased by a framework of Soviet-era neo-classical blocks.[101] Plans for Haymarket Square dating from the late 1930s and from the early 1950s had emphasised homogeneity as the primary principle behind the reconstruction of the square – a principle that rendered superfluous and embarrassing any buildings that were notably different in architectural style. In the 1935 General Plan for the Reconstruction of Leningrad, Haymarket Square had been accorded a key role as the link between the old city centre and the new (the House of Soviets on what was then called International prospect, later Stalin prospect, and then Moscow prospect). An article published in *The Architecture of Leningrad* in 1939 had evoked the project of harmonisation that was to take place, with the removal of the old trading halls:

> The disorganisation of the square's architectural identity, its insanitary character now make extremely pressing the issue of its complete reconstruction in

99. "Spisok rabot v khrame Vsekh Skorbiashchikh [List of Building Works in the Church of the Mother of God Joy of Those who Grieve]," TsGALI-SPb., f. 229, op. 1, d. 39, l. 70. 23 June 1970. At this period, the Church of Saints Simeon and Anne was removed from its "post-box institute," but transferred to the Meteorological Museum: see *Biulleten´ ispolnitel´nogo komiteta Leningradskogo soveta deputatov trudiashchikhsia* [Bulletin of the Executive Committee of Lensovet], 15 (1972): 21.

100. Some monastic city representations (*podvor´ia*) were turned into domestic accommodation in the early Soviet period, as were parts of the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, but this does not seem to have happened in the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, the general preservation policy was to try and prevent mundane activities from taking place in architectural monuments: the files of VOOPIiK include some entertaining examples of this, including fuss about refreshments in the Coffee Pavilion in the Summer Gardens (definitely not to include alcohol or anything more than soft drinks and biscuits), and about sunbathing outside the Peter and Paul Fortress (an offence to the building's solemn history as a prison for sainted revolutionaries).

101. Il´in, "Ansambl´ v arkhitekturnom oblike Leningrada," 9-11.

architectural and planning terms. The project that the Architecture and Planning Department of Lensovet has drawn up anticipates that the market halls will be moved to other Leningrad markets.

The Saviour on the Haymarket Church, c. 1935.
Courtesy Museum of the History of St. Petersburg

The church building was also to be included in this process of purging and harmonisation: it would be rebuilt to echo the design of the guardhouse building standing opposite:

> The reconstruction anticipates the preservation of Beretti's guardhouse building on the narrow side of the square and the rebuilding of the church, whose facades will be reshaped so that they form a pendant to Beretti's archway. The opposite side is realised in the form of two five-storey blocks with pilasters used to articulate architectural rhythm.[102]

A considerably more detailed plan preserved, in draft form, in the archive of the landscape designer E.A. Poliakova, an associate of Il´in's, and a member of staff at the Museum of the City in Petrograd-Leningrad from 1918 to 1941, refers specifically to the intrusive presence of a dilapidated house from the 1750s "in the elaborate and elegant Baroque style," not to speak of a far more uncongenial later building, an apartment block from 1912 that was described as a "seven-storey giant with an amazingly tasteless façade, crudely decorated with coloured tiles." Once completed, the new homogeneous five-storey blocks would be uniformly rusticated to second-storey height, and between the third floors, a frieze would be created "encircling, as it were, the entire square." Both the key buildings on the square, the church and the guardhouse building, would be reconstructed: the bell-tower and domes would be removed, while the guardhouse would be broadened and heightened. In the centre of the square would be placed "a monument to the heroic defence of Petrograd during the Civil War."[103]

The plan to reconstruct the square was interrupted by the onset of war, but once the conflict was over, reconstruction was on the agenda again. In 1946, N.V. Baranov, then the Chief Architect of the city, wrote in *Building and Architecture of Leningrad* journal that the reconstruction of the Haymarket "is to be completed." [104] Extensive work on levelling out building heights was done in the early 1950s, but the square still nagged at the instincts of city planners.[105] The completion of the metro station

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102. S.M. Zemtsov, "Rekonstruktsiia Sennoi i Obukhovskoi ploshchadei [The Reconstruction of Haymarket and Obukhovo Squares]," *Arkhitektura Leningrada*, 3 (1939), 47-48.

103. Untitled note on the reconstruction of the Haymarket (no author given), c. 1940, OR RNB (Manuscript Department of the Russian National Library), f. 606 (Evgeniia Alekseevna Poliakova), ed. khr. 127, l. 1-5. For a sketch of Polyakova's biography and her work on green space in Leningrad, see T.V. Barabko, "'Zelenoe stroitel´stvo' Leningrada v 1920-kh – 1940-kh godakh (po materialam arkhiva E.A. Poliakovoi [Park and Garden Architecture in Leningrad from the 1920s to the 1940s]," in *Universitetskii istorik* [The University Historian] vol. 10 (2012) (St. Petersburg State University: History Faculty), 135-141.

104. N.V. Baranov, "Zadachi Leningradskikh arkhitektorov v realizatsii piatiletnego plana vosstanovleniia i razvitiia g. Leningrada i oblasti [The Tasks of Leningrad Architects in Realising the Five-Year Plan for the Reconstruction and Develoment of Leningrad and Province]," *Stroitel´stvo i arkhitektura Leningrada* 1 (1946): 3.

105. For a general historical account of the square's development, abundantly illustrated, see Zoia Yurkova, "Sennaya ploshchad´: vchera, segodnya, zavtra [The Haymarket: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow]," http://lib.rus.ec/b/375320/read.

in 1963 did not help matters, as its boxy style failed to resolve the spaces left vacant by the demolished church.

In 1965, M.Z. Vil´ner, presenting yet another plan for its redevelopment, spoke of the widespread dissatisfaction with the square's current state:

> The Haymarket – or Peace Square as it is now called – is one of the few open spaces in the city of Leningrad whose architecture and general disorganisation excite dissatisfaction among most of those living in the city, and not just among professionals. Despite all the efforts to make the square architecturally elegant, it remains a conglomerate of diverse buildings. In short, it is a mish-mash. And no architect can avoid confronting the issue.[106]

Interestingly, even at this stage one of the participants in the discussion, B.A. Razodeev, the head of the department of city planning at the State Inspectorate for the Protection of Monuments, was prepared to argue that the removal of churches from city squares had been an architectural disaster, resulting in desolation.

> Things like those buildings [i.e. two houses that Vil'ner proposed replacing by a modern building] should be preserved. It's not the point that they aren't official monuments. Demolishing is dead easy, but preservation isn't. In Hungary, in Italy, you can see lots of examples of a new building done really well, with marble and aluminium, next to an old one, and they rub along together, and the problem is solved with reference to the entire square. And with us? We had Uprising Square, and we pulled the church down, and built a metro station that looks like the church, only worse. So, now we've pulled down the church on Haymarket, so are we to put up a hotel? No, that won't do. So let's put up an office block, the kind you'd get anywhere… It's not good: demolish first, think up the solution later. [107]

"We've made too big a success of the demolition," concluded Razodeev, to laughter and applause.[108]

Once an obstacle to the square's integration and elegance, the Church of the Saviour was seen, by 1965, as an important constituent of its character. A decade later, preservationist attitudes had become still more assertive, with architects openly arguing that the *dominanta*, or "keynote," of many areas in central Leningrad was and should be an ecclesiastical building. In the spring of 1975,

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106. "Stenograficheskii otchet obsuzhdeniia proekta zastroiki ploshchadi Mira v Leningrade [Stenographic Record of the Discussion on the Plan of Construction on ploshchad´ Mira [Peace Square], Leningrad]," 18 November 1965, TsGALI-SPb., f. 341, op. 1, d. 682, l. 18.

107. Ibid., l. 38. For Razodeev's position, see the article on the website of the St. Petersburg Union of Restorers "Tat´iana Nikolaeva: Alleya slavy [Tatiana Nikolaeva: The Avenue of Fame]," (author not credited) http://www.srspb.ru/article.php?id=247. (accessed 8 February 2013).

108. "Stenograficheskii otchet obsuzhdeniia," l. 38.

this principle was invoked to argue for the retention of the Church of Saints Boris and Gleb:

> The building of the former Church of Saints Boris and Gleb is not an official monument of architecture. However, its picturesque silhouette enlivens the humble panorama of the ordinary buildings on the embankment. After the construction of the hotel and the automated telephone exchange, the significance of the building as a kind of 'buffer' between old and new buildings will grow still further. [...] The unjustified demolition of the Church of Saints Boris and Gleb would be yet one more mistake of city planning comparable with the demolition of the Church of the Saviour on Peace Square [the Haymarket] or the demolition of no. 16 Rimskii-Korsakov prospekt and other sites that will be extremely difficult to replace.

Rather than being presented as a "foreign body" in the landscape of the Neva embankments, adorned towards the centre of the city by structures from the "Golden Age," the Church of Saints Boris and Gleb was interpreted as an important complement to these long-valued building. It was one of a triangle of buildings (all, as it happened, ecclesiastical) that made up the core "ensemble" of this particular area:

> The Church of Saints Boris and Gleb plays the role of the third basic *dominanta* of the embankment. Its city planning role is quite different from that of Smolnyi Cathedral or the Alexander Nevsky Monastery. [...] Its well-chosen location, on a bend of the Neva, means that, without jarring against the main *dominanty* of the site, the church none the less contributes to the rhythmic articulation of the three-kilometre-long embankment [on which it stands].[109]

Thus, the "city planning significance" (*gradostroitel´noe znachenie*) of church buildings was now a generally accepted principle of Leningrad architecture – in professional discussions, if not in the mainstream press. The discussion of Haymarket Square that took place a few months later was entirely in accordance with the shifting views, as was the concern on the part of VOOPIiK's board to provide money for church restoration. In 1972, for example, the Society spent 5,000 roubles (about double the annual salary of a middle-ranking academic) in order to draw up plans for a restoration of the crumbling exterior of St. Catherine's Church at Murino, and four times that on work at the Chesme Church, in very poor condition after a fire back in the 1930s.[110]

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109. "Chernovik Obrashcheniia Prezidiuma Soveta LGO VOOPIiK" (April 1975): "Zakliucheniia o zastroike Sinopskoi naberezhnoi i k proektu ee rekonstruktsii [Draft Letter from the Presidium of the Council of the Leningrad City Section of VOOPIiK (April 1975): Conclusions on the Plan of Construction on the Sinope Embankment and the Project for its Reconstruction]," TsGALI-SPb., f. 229, op. 1, d. 168, l. 1, 7.

110. TsGALI-SPb., f. 229, op. 1, d. 72, l. 53.


The Church of Saints Boris and Gleb on the Kalashnikov Embankment, photographed by N.G. Matveev (c. 1910). http://oldsp.ru/photo/view/4019.

By now, it was not just representatives of the highly-educated intelligentsia who were worried about the fate of old buildings – even including churches. Rank-and-file members of VOOPIiK also contacted the society's governing body

to alert them to neglected buildings. A striking case in point is a letter written by a VOOPIiK member in Sestroretsk, and expressing concern about "a badly damaged church" in the nearby resort of Zelenogorsk, on the Primorskoe shosse:

> We know it was built in 1912. The architect is unknown.[111] At the moment, the Zelenogorsk Food Trade Depot is in it. You can see war damage inside and outside, it looks quite pitiful. The bell-towers are damaged, the plaster's coming off. You can see red brick in places. But once it was a grandiose and impressive building. Now it would cost lots to restore it. It stands on a prominent place, right by the coastal highway, where tourists going out for trips are always passing by, and foreigners among them. The Sestroretsk Executive Committee [of the local soviet] often gets letters from members of the working people and intelligentsia expressing the desire that the building should be restored. But it is hardly unique and possessing of such architectural and artistic virtues as to deserve preservation. The Sestroretsk District Committee of the CPSU and the Executive Committee of the District Soviet are unanimous – pull the building down and put something new up there instead.

The letter-writer's obvious confusion about the situation – should the church be restored, or on the other hand, pulled down? – did not dissipate as he continued to ponder what should be done. Perhaps an organisation should be found to build a tourist centre and repair the church? Locals of long standing were unanimous that it should be preserved, and that would be a "far-sighted step in a political sense," bearing in mind, once again, those foreign tourists. At the same time, it seemed that the Architecture and Planning Committee had already made a formal or informal decision in favour of demolition.[112] While the response in the highest levels of VOOPIiK to this artless missive has not survived, the church did; restoration commenced in 1980 (to have it looking respectable in time for the Moscow Olympics), and plans were laid to convert it from a warehouse into a local museum.[113] This outcome – the use of a former church building as an exhibition hall – continued to be the preferred solution in the city also.[114]

Yet the sole church-museum with a display that at least partly focused on architecture remained the St. Isaac's Cathedral, and even here, the Foucault's Pendulum hanging from the dome as an aid to "atheist education" continued to hark back to an era when defusing the "counter-revolutionary" character of

111. The building the writer had in mind was the Church of the Kazan´ Icon of the Mother of God, at no. 547, Primorskoe shosse, constructed by N.N. Nikonov (beginning in 1910) in the "Moscow-Sudzal" style. It was closed after the War (when the Soviet forces invaded Zelenogorsk, then Teriokki), and used as a warehouse. In the 1960s, the Orthodox Church petitioned for its return, but received a refusal. It was returned to Orthodox use in 1989. See http://al-spbphoto.narod.ru/Hram/zelenogorsk.html.

112. TsGALI-SPb., f. 229, op. 2, d. 45, l. 12.

113. http://al-spbphoto.narod.ru/Hram/zelenogorsk.html.

114. Examples in St. Petersburg itself included the former Church of St. Panteleimon, transferred to the Museum of the History of Leningrad in 1980 (conversion into a Museum of the Battle of Gangut commenced not long afterwards), or the Chesme Church, where the "Victory of Chesme" exhibition was opened in 1977.

these structures had been a prime objective.[115] And most churches, including architectural monuments, which were not used for worship, remained in dire condition, particularly in areas where tourists were unlikely to see them.[116] At the eighteenth-century Church of Prophet Elijah in the Gunpowder Factory district, repairs after a fire in 1974 dragged on inconsequentially for years; the fine neo-Gothic Church of Saints Peter and Paul at Shuvalovo was in a ruinous state.[117] All the same, ideals of city preservation now accommodated and indeed focused on these structures, despite the continuing severe control of the religious belief that had been the original force behind their construction. The shift from "counter-revolutionary monument" to valued achievement of national and popular tradition was differently nuanced, and more gradual, in Leningrad than in some other Russian cities. But by the mid-1970s, it was well entrenched.

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This article has argued that the Brezhnev era saw a fundamental reassessment of the existing principles of city planning in Leningrad, and of the place of ecclesiastical architecture within this. The 1920s and 1930s had been characterised by the emergence of a broad intellectual consensus, in the city's elite, about the ethos of planning and preservation. Pre-revolutionary monuments were not repudiated per se, but were valued and thought suitable for integration into the modern planning of the "socialist city" only where they suited the governing aesthetic (secular and neo-classical). Primary effort was expended on buildings that were pronounced to be architectural masterpieces, especially those that did not look like churches to begin with. While Stalin's concordat with the Russian Orthodox Church in 1943 in significant respects re-inscribed church-state relations, the attitudes of city planning departments did not change fundamentally. The Khrushchev era, on the other hand, witnessed both a worsening of state-church relations generally, and an assault on the principles of heritage preservation. Adverse reaction to the new wave of iconoclasm preceded the change of leadership in 1964 (the demolition of the Church of the Saviour on Sennaia Square generated waves of indignation below the surface). However, the heritage preservation movement started to gain real momentum after the founding of VOOPIiK in 1965. The society's files, like those of the heritage preservation section of the Union of Architects, point to a remarkably dynamic debate on the role of churches in city planning, and make clear

115. I remember seeing this displayed myself in 1985: otherwise, a visit to St. Isaac's mainly consisted of viewing the city from the upper galleries.

116. The sense that tourists were offended by churches in poor repair was routinely used as an argument in favour of restoration: see, for instance, the comments on the church at Zelenogorsk cited above.

117. On the Shuvalovo church, see S. Karishnev, "Vozrodim khram! [We'll Resurrect the Church!]," *Vyborgskaia storona* 4 (1992): 2; on the Church of St. Elijah the Prophet, see Father A. Budnikov, *Tserkov´ Sviatogo Proroka Ilii* [The Church of the Holy Prophet Elijah] (SPb.: Izdanie khrama Sviatogo Proroka Ilii, 1998).

the underlying links of the argument with broader shifts in attitude to aesthetics and national identity. While in terms of everyday practices such as maintenance churches often continued to be neglected, symbolically they were starting to play a far larger role in the "Petersburg text" than at any period since 1917.

At the same time, there was persisting uncertainty about the role of churches in the landscape, and a tenacious commitment to the secular use of buildings that were considered to be of historical and aesthetic value. It was not until the post-Soviet era that another church listed as an architectural monument was returned to believers for worship, and in the 2010s, four major ecclesiastical buildings still made up the "Museum of Four Cathedrals," with a focus on architecture, rather than on religious practice, in the displays.[118] Equally, attitudes to the role of the church in city planning changed slowly, with new building mostly confined to small commemorative structures, or to the city's suburbs.[119] As of the time of writing (September 2013), the reconstruction of the Church of the Saviour on the Haymarket continued to be the regular subject of discussion. However, the church had not yet been rebuilt, while discussions on how to reshape the square, still interpreted as scrubby and unsatisfactory in appearance, went on gripping not just professional planners and architects, but the city's population more generally.[120]

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118. The situation with churches that were not listed was rather different. Even before the Millennium of the Orthodox Church in 1988, a landmark in church-state relations, one important church, the Chapel of the Blessed Ksenia of Petersburg (now St. Ksenia), was returned for worship (in 1984). And the late 1980s and early 1990s were to see the return of many churches that were considered of the first architectural importance, including the Kazan´ Cathedral (in 1989; the New Maiden Convent was returned in the same year). At the same time, the pro-restoration lobby was much less vocal than in Moscow. In 1990, the then Metropolitan Aleksii, later Patriarch Aleksii, declined pro tem the return of the St. Isaac's Cathedral and the Royal Stables (Koniushennaia) Church, on the grounds that the ROC currently lacked the money and staff to be able to cope. Even after the passing of the 2010 statute that made over all buildings that had been used for legal worship before 1917 to religious denominations, the ROC in St. Petersburg held back from pressing its claims. (For a detailed discussion of this period, see Kelly, "Competing Orthodoxies").

119. Examples in the first category include the memorial church to the Blockade victims incinerated in a brick factory that once stood on the site (Victory Park, Moscow prospekt), and the memorial to the demolished Cathedral of the Trinity on Trinity (formerly Revolution) Square.

120. Not one important church has been rebuilt in Petersburg since the collapse of Soviet power (in striking contrast to Moscow, and indeed the much smaller settlement of Pushkin, where the Catherine Cathedral, blown up in 1939, was rebuilt in 2010). On Sennaia ploshchad´ in the post-Soviet period, see e.g. the material on the site of the preservation organization "Zhivoi Gorod" [Living City], http://www.save-spb.ru/page/houses/houses/sennaya_ploschad_.html?section=houses/houses. On 11 February 2013, just as I was finishing this article, it was reported that the Church of the Saviour might be rebuilt as part of yet another reconstruction of the square: see Galina Artemenko, "V Sankt-Peterburg pristupili k samomu statusnomu tserkovnomu proektu [In St Peterburg, work has started on the Church rebuilding project par excellence]," IA Regnum, http://archi.ru/events/news/news_present_press.html?nid=46135. When I took part in a discussion about vanished buildings in St. Petersburg on 13 April 2013, the other participants (including a representative of the lobby group Zhivoi Gorod, a curator at the Museum of the History of St. Petersburg, an architectural historian, and a specialist in the history of St. Petersburg's theatres) unanimously agreed off-air that while rebuilding the Saviour on the Haymarket might be acceptable, that church was a special case; the proposal to rebuild the Church of the Archangel Michael on Kulibin Square (in Little Kolomna) was, for instance, quite ridiculous; the square looked better without it. Preservation groups these

Alongside its contribution to understanding of shifting attitudes to the non-Communist past, and to the limits of change in stance, the history of attitudes to churches also provokes reflection on the history of "socialist cities" in a broader sense. Classic studies of late socialist urban geography, such as R.A. French and F.E. Hamilton's *The Socialist City* (1979) have tended to emphasise the peculiarities of spatial structure, such as the absence of suburbs, the different configuration of industrial/residential zoning, and the lack of correlation between social status and place of residence (i.e. the non-existence of "working-class" and "middle-class" areas, districts denominated by particular ethnic groups, and so on).[121] Commentators from post-socialist Russia have tended to make arguments along similar lines.[122] The discussions over the fate of churches, on the other hand, show increasing preoccupation with a feature that was *not* specific to the socialist city. Certainly, these discussions were ideologically localised (it was not until the mid-1980s that Soviet newspapers and journals began to give space to the issue of church conservation), but at the same time, they happened in institutionally significant places, such as the Union of Architects, an indication that ecclesiastical architecture was increasingly becoming part of 'official' Soviet culture.

The handling of religious buildings in Soviet Russia was, by the 1970s, no longer "Soviet" in the way this would have been understood in the early 1920s (when the non-Soviet character of these structures had regularly been underlined).[123] Added to that, contemporary Western Europe was seeing a drop in church attendance, not infrequently accompanied by the demolition or radical conversion of "redundant churches."[124] But the popular alternative paradigm of "normalisation" (often applied to developments such as the increasing importance of private life in late socialist culture) does not fit the situation either, since the social and economic constriction of religious communities' activities (for instance, the ban on fund-raising and on access to state grants) still expressed a radical secularism that owed something to the socialist past. Late socialist Leningrad was becoming less "socialist," but the result was not something that necessarily resembled an urban centre in Western Europe or the US. It is also unclear that what happened here was even 'typical' of processes in other Soviet urban centres, given that, as I have emphasised, the rise of local identity was a key development of the period. But perhaps the very

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days are far more concerned about "civil buildings" (i.e. secular ones) than religious buildings, leaving religious groups to exert pressure about the latter.

121. R.A. French, and F.E. Ian Hamilton, eds., *The Socialist City: Spatial Structure and Urban Policy* (Chichester : Wiley and Sons, 1979).

122. See e.g. the contributions to a round-table on urban culture in the journal *Forum for Anthropology and Culture* 7 (2011).

123. I address this point more thoroughly in "Making Buildings Soviet: Radical Secularism and the Preservation of 'Cultic Buildings,' 1918-1924," Chapter 1 of *Socialist Churches*.

124. On the history of the Redundant Churches Fund (now the Churches Conservation Trust), which was set up in 1968, see Matthew Saunders, "The Redundant Churches Fund Comes of Age" (1990), http://www.ihbc.org.uk/context_archive/28/redundant.htm. (Accessed 14 February 2013).

sense of paradoxicality and diversity, as expressed by discussions that undercut the often vaunted "public/private" division, is an insight that can be used to correct the monolithic understanding of the "period of stagnation" as a time when overall social norms and preferences were obvious to all, and when "everything was forever until it was no more."[125]

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125. As in the title of the well-known study by Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More: The "Last" Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, 2006). Yurchak argues strongly that the group at which he looks in detail – his own contemporaries, or those born around 1960 – did not have a sense of "cognitive dissonance," instead taking a "performative" stance to the Soviet language of power. But it is clear that for older historical subjects, the re-examination of the past launched in the Khrushchev era had been a watershed, and that those who had lived through it (such as the people involved in the debates I have discussed here) were often left with a sense of not really knowing what the canons of historical memory should be.